

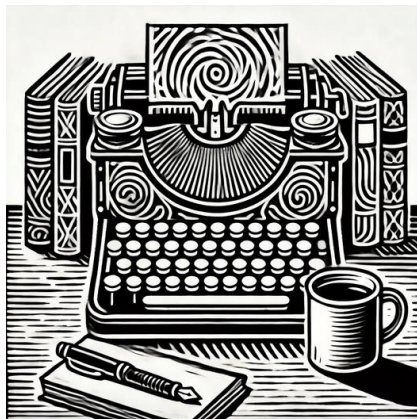


The Radio Enthusiast APA

No. 3 Spring 2025

radiothrifthopnh@gmail.com

Why an APA? - I spend too much time staring at screens. Out of both a self-care and altruistic impulse, I thought it would be healthy to try and reconnect with the written page more often—books, zines, and writing. An APA is an opportunity to establish offline communication which can be augmented by online references or resources where needed. It is a step toward the aesthetic that I hope to return to as I shift into retirement: typewriters, letters, writing zines, and enjoying the many aspects of radio that I love.

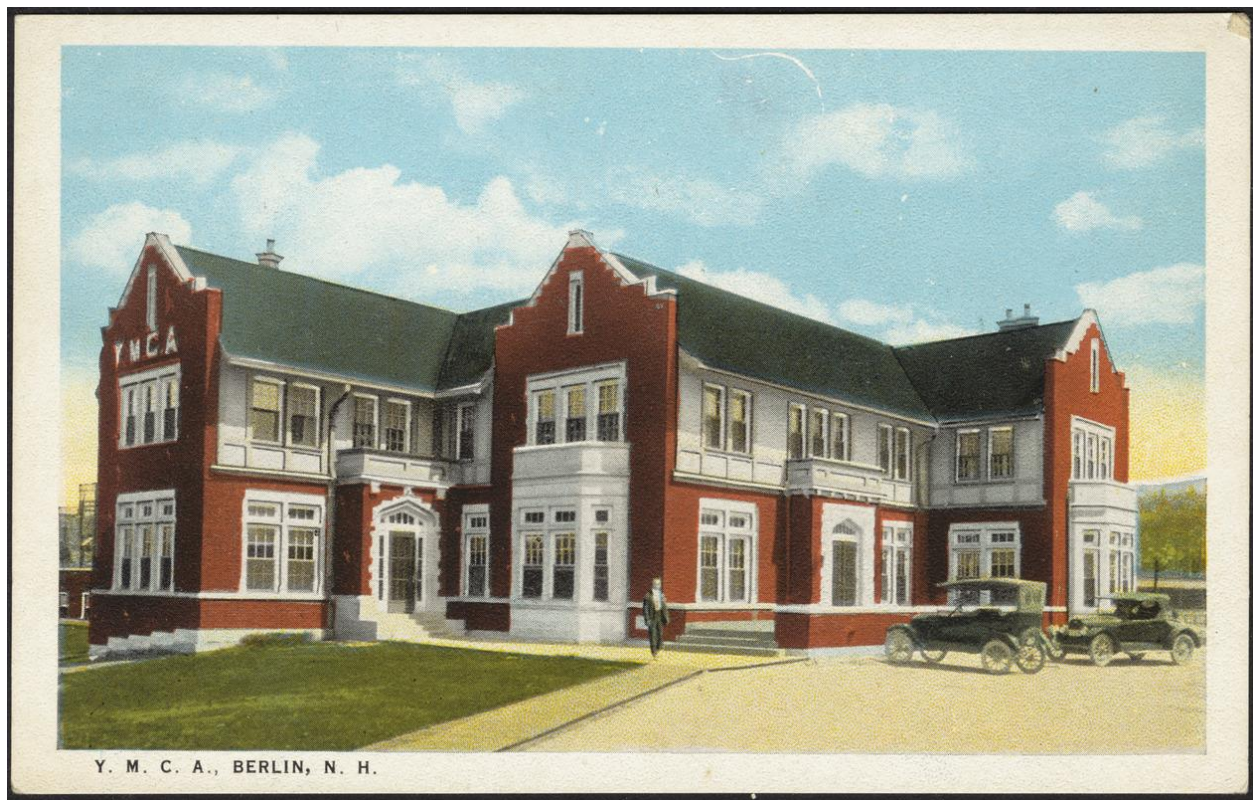


*The 1700 kHz Test Card #3:
A zine by Fred Moe
for the Radio Enthusiast APA
Spring 2025*

Comments re: Issue 2:

Radio Active – Mark Strickert

WKAV in Laconia was definitely an early radio station in New Hampshire and possibly the first licensed station to transmit on the airwaves. There is no evidence that WEAQ ever transmitted though supposedly an experimental station was housed at the same location in the late 1910's (the Berlin NH YMCA).



Pirate Radio – Voice of the Voyager, Voice of the Purple Pumpkin, Voice of Laryngitis ... so many iconic 80's / 90's pirates! WAIR All Indie Radio was indeed a shortwave pirate broadcast via the high frequency hi-jinx of KIPM. But I wouldn't know anything about that.

APAs – Thank you for sharing this APA with folks. Given the realities of 2025, I realize that a radio APA may not catch fire, in fact it might be pushed overboard into the flotsam of wreckage from many now-defunct APAs.

Justin Patrick Moore - the concept of Phone Phreaking for some reason makes me think about KMUD and their legendary exploits from the Mojave Phone Booth. Here's a brief recap of what happened:

On March 20, 2000 an adventurous and enthusiastic crew from shortwave pirate station KMUD descended on the Mojave Phone Booth for a historic broadcast from the site. The phone booth had been recently publicized in the media including the nationally syndicated Art Bell show. One of the KMUD operators that night called the Art Bell show from the booth. KMUD was allowed to give the time and frequency of their broadcast but not the phone number (which was 760-733-9969). However, the phone number was easily available on the internet, setting the stage for a live call-in show transmitted by KMUD on 6851 and 3450 kHz.

KMUD crew members spent three days and two nights in the Mojave National Preserve and recall the weekend as being perfect for their activities. Careful planning had gone into the technical arrangements. Antennas were set up and transmitters finely tuned. Batteries were charged and ready to go. An audio pickup and mixer were connected to the phone. Wires and cables were strung everywhere, turning the booth into a scene from an electrician's repair shop.

Everything worked like a charm. No park rangers visited the phone booth that weekend and thankfully no one from the Federal Communications Commission. KMUD's broadcast featured conversations with callers, some music and station IDs, and the announcers encouraging listeners to call the phone booth. An interesting woman caller suggested that the Mojave Phone Booth was drawing its power from a UFO held at "Area 51" in Nevada. Two callers reported on reception conditions. Two reporters from Canadian Television arrived at the phone booth just prior to the KMUD transmission. They interviewed the KMUD crew before the show and videotaped them fielding phone calls. This must have been a first – shortwave radio pirates broadcasting live being interviewed by television journalists.

The KMUD broadcast from the Mojave Phone Booth was well documented in audio and video. It is unclear how many people actually listened to the broadcast on shortwave but those who did were witnesses to pirate radio history. Some of the raw audio is archived at **archive.org**. May archive.org never crash again! One of my goals is to make a project of downloading anything remotely interesting to me from archive.org. I'm 65 now ... so if I work on it a few hours a month I'll probably be 210 by the time I'm finished.



What is “radio” in 2025?

James Clerk Maxwell predicted the existence of radio waves in the early 1860s. His predictions were proved true when Heinrich Hertz successfully demonstrated electromagnetic waves in 1886. In 1895, Guglielmo Marconi became the first person to receive a radio signal. By October 1902, he could telegraph the letter "S" across the English Channel, which became the first successful transatlantic radiotelegraph message.

Today, millions of people still listen to the radio daily in their cars, smartphones, wi-fi receivers, and with computers. In addition to traditional AM/FM broadcasting, shortwave, longwave, modern radio includes DAB (Digital Audio Broadcasting), internet radio streaming, and SDR (Software-Defined Radio) technologies.

Having been a radio “purist” in the past I now have to admit that I enjoy listening to apps on my phone via Bluetooth speakers as much as I enjoy traditional radio signals.

One of these is **Luxuria Music** - the coolest of the cool, a bachelor pad vibe with increasingly rare music that defies genre or logic. I mean: this stuff was passe by the mid 70's and shouldn't work - but it does. I've heard exotica gems, indie pop, jazzy beat, crooners, and eclectic music that isn't readily available in any digital format - if available at

all. There are extended musical sets and live DJs / or recorded podcasts on Luxuria Music including Ray Carmen – an indie pop legend who started out as a home taper back in the day and who has recorded some essential tunes over the years, currently in the band *Librarians With Hickeys*.



Notable shows / podcasts (there are over a dozen on a weekly schedule) include: Thrifting for Tunes with John T and The Paisley Underground Emporium. This is all listener funded / non-commercial and highly recommended.

Groveton Community Radio 1630 kHz

My part 15 station is humming along, literally (the transmitter isn't that great) though sometimes I switch it up to FM. Reception is excellent on my retro-looking Crosley Bluebird and also around the block and down the street on my car radio.

I'm focusing on syndicated programs past & present: **The Secret Museum of the Air** with Pat Conte and Citizen Kafka, **Dollar Country** (the best country music show ever), 1940's & 50's episodes of **Grand Old Opry** (the best **live** country music show ever and holds up eight decades later) and some unusual shows borrowed from internet station **The Global Voice – Eyes on Success** and **Spotlight on Assistance Dogs** focusing on people with low or no vision. At some point I may initiate a second frequency with Classical & world music as its focus.

~ fred

Radio Activity 3

Mark Strickert – PO Box 1171, Rialto CA 92377

busnrail@yahoo.com or busnrail@outlook.com

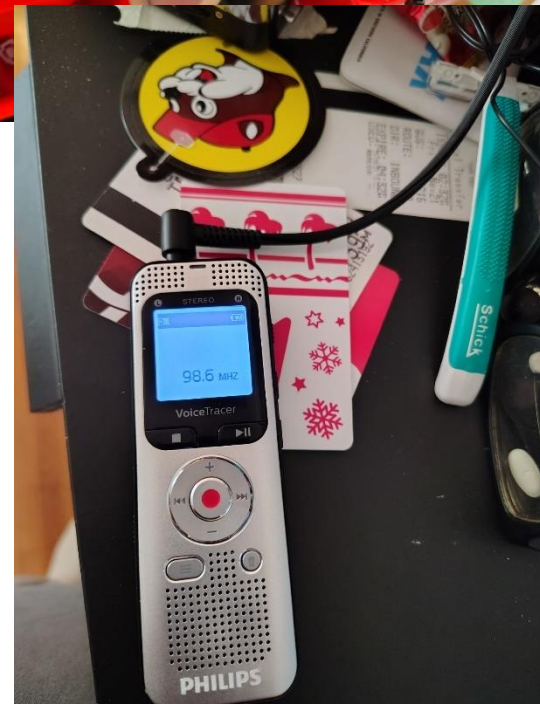
3/21/2025

A good hello! Welcome to the 3rd episode in what is hopefully a regular series of radio-oriented zines within the *Radio Enthusiast eAPA*. I am even remembering to write down a few notes, either on a notepad or on my phone, as I think of topics to cover. Such as

Converting Cassette Audio to Digital

I have accumulated hundreds of analog audio cassette tapes from my many years of recording and trading. I began a serious effort to convert the audio to digital in 2016, at first by plugging a cassette player into my first digital recorder (a Sangean PR-D8 radio/recorder). Most of that early work would be lost when an external hard drive went Kablooeey on me two years later. By then I discovered a reasonably inexpensive alternative ... the Blumway Cassette to MP3 Converter has for me been the best of the several on the market (many of which look nearly identical). They do wear out over time ... the one pictured is my fifth, and it arrived here just a few days ago. They do have their quirks, for instance while they transfer the audio on to a flash drive, not all brands will work properly. It liked my Sony flash drives best, but both of mine were bought at Fry's Electronics way back in 2009 and recently quit on me. SanDisk and Lexar will still work, but then there is the issue with the flash drive's capacity ... the lower the capacity of the flash drive the better. When using one with more than 8 GB of storage space, sometimes the audio will hiccup (a few seconds of audio is skipped every 30 seconds) or the flash drive will simply be rejected. I have had to resort to using a SD card-to-USB adaptor with a 4 GB SanDisk SD card, but then only the simple SD cards will work ... those newfangled "Ultra Plus" SD cards can only handle data files, not audio files (this also goes for trying to use "Ultra Plus" SD cards in a digital radio-recorder).

Speaking of radio/recorders, sadly the above-mentioned Sangean PR-D8 AM/FM radio/recorder is no longer on the market. I would like to get a new one or even a used one, but the PR-D8 must have a loyal following as when they pop up on eBay they command "collector" prices (usually \$200 or more). The nearest to an alternative I could acquire is a Tecsun ICR-110, which is much less user friendly especially as it only accepts a proprietary battery that needs to be patched into a computer to charge, and it has less than ideal audio. Really its only saving grace is the AM band is less susceptible to the ever-present electronic noises. Most of my airchecking on trips is now with either an Insignia (Best Buy brand) HD Radio



patched into a Sangean DAR-101 digital recorder, and a teeny tiny Philips DVT2010 digital audio recorder. Alas both receivers are FM-only and are both less than ideal for reception of low-powered or fringe stations. The Philips at least tunes in 0.1 MHz steps, so will have some use for me on the upcoming Paris trip where my prime aircheck targets will include 90,4 92,8 and 98,6 MHz

Old Fart Alert

Sadly I can still remember when cassette packets could be mailed with First Class postage. Such packages are now treated like Fourth Class ground packages, but they cost six times as much to mail as First Class for the much slower service. Even after the big increase first happened, tape packages would still take 2 or 3 days in the late 2010s but they now take more like 5 to 10 days. No surprise, I used to have a dozen regular tape traders but am now down to two. Most trades now are digital, via Wetransfer, Dropbox, or Internet Archives. Wetransfer (<https://wetransfer.com/>) is easiest to use especially for direct trading with one person, but the files need to be retrieved within three days otherwise the files need to be re-sent. Internet Archive (my stuff is at <https://archive.org/details/@marktime42>) is the most permanent, but also by far the most everyone-can-see public.

San Francisco Radio History KSFO KFRC KXLR etc

The recent loss of the former great 560 kHz in San Francisco reminds me that I have long considered a couple different articles on San Francisco radio. One, a look at how a once-great radio market has all but collapsed, but it would be too much Old Fart bitching and hey it's the same all over North America. I may still attempt it, but I can't see myself writing it in one sitting at least without at least a six-pack of cold brews. Two, an article of the wackiest attempts at broadcasting in San Francisco. I first thought of the second topic way way back in the early 1980s, when a colleague in Pittsburgh wrote such an article about strange stations in his own market. By the way, 560 was for years the great KSFO, with an amazing collection of world-class personalities for a 5,000-watt station, but in recent years it became a toilet of a talk station. The station owners recently moved said toilet up the dial to 810 kHz, formerly occupied by the equally (and also formerly) venerable KGO. That station had been talk for years, but unlike most they offered a wide variety of viewpoints presented intelligently. They did suffer through several dumbing-downs in their last decade, then for a time descended into sports-talk ... no, worse yet, sports BETTING talk. Needless to say, a total waste of 50,000 watts. Not that moving the KSFO rabble to 810 is much less of a waste. After simulcasting for a few weeks, they turned the 560 transmitter off at the end of February.



Call Sign Use by Country

While trying to and mostly succeeding in piecing together a radio station list for the Paris, France area, I came up with a sort-of idea, to chatter a bit about radio call-sign use (or lack thereof) in some countries. For now I will only cover countries I have some familiarity with from visits and/or aircheck trades.

Of those familiar countries, the US and Mexico are the only two where all radio stations use assigned call letters on the air on all stations. Or at least are supposed to ... In recent travels. I have run into a few US stations that have decided to ignore rules and no longer mention call-signs on the air, never mind giving the required top-of-hour legal identification (calls and city-of-license, in that order). All Mexican stations I have heard mention their call-sign in Spanish once an hour, though their ID often mentions what Estado (state) they are in rather than the city-of-license, and there is apparently no strict requirement that the legal ID be at the top of the hour.

I have not received any airchecks from Australia or Japan in over 20 years, but nearly all used their assigned call-letters at least hourly. Many of the Japanese stations even gave the call-signs in English (JOQR and my favorite at the time JOAV "J-Wave" come to mind). I have also heard call-signs in the past on stations in The Bahamas, Canada, and Cuba. Some Canadian stations even today will give American-style, call and city IDs around top of the hour.

All broadcasting stations in Brazil have assigned call-letters, but during my 2018 visit I heard only one station actually use them on-air (one of the Sao Paulo AM stations?). At one time, all Argentine stations had call-signs, and they may still do. I've never heard an aircheck from Argentina, but stickers I received mostly from Buenos Aires back in the 1960s through 1980s all had call-signs displayed prominently, and several pictures I have seen of Eva Peron from her radio days show the call-sign LR3 on the microphone stand. *[Fun Fact: that station still exists, running the audio for CNN Argentina.]*



Researching for trips to Egypt, France, Germany, and the United Kingdom, I could find no call-signs for any broadcast facility. I did see that at one time some British and French AM stations had assigned calls, but I have no evidence the call-signs were ever given on the air. By the by, most British AMs and all French AM stations are no longer on the air.

Feedback-ack-ack

The 1700 kHz Test Card #2: A zine by Fred Moe

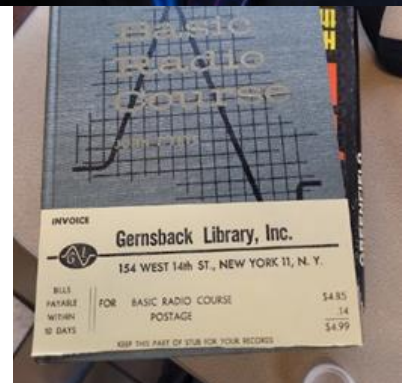
Your radio writings always have me searching for radio station histories. This is a good thing. Alas WKBR is one of those stations where at one point a station owner with some sense of promotion but zero sense of history decided the best course of action was to throw out a long-time call-sign in favor of a call-game which maybe sorta kinda fit in more with their current programming type or slogan-of-the-month, in this case sports-yap as WGAM. I would have heard the station while they were still WKBR, but it would have been when I stayed in Manchester on my way to Boston in March of 1989 ... notable most as my first ever visit to New Hampshire. Yet another of those If I Ever Find Tape situations. I was also reminded a bit of the only New Hampshire station I ever heard in Chicago via DX, WHEB in Portsmouth. That was one of those stations that used to have limited operation hours codified in their license. For WHEB, that meant they had to sign-off at sunset in Atlanta, where WSB was the 50,000-watt clear channel blowtorch on 750 kHz. It took exquisite timing to get WHEB before they went off for the night ... I must have made that work on some quiet summer evening. Which also then reminds me of some Chicago stations that had similar limited-hour licenses, such as WJJD which could stay on after Chicago sunset but had to be off by Salt Lake City sunset, and WAIT which could stay on until sunset in Fort Worth, Texas ... most memorable as my Grandpa Frankie's car radio was pretty much permanently stuck on 820. WAIT was a pretty good easy listening station (wish I had some tapes!!), but when they signed-off WBAP in Fort Worth was already booming in most nights with country music! Did not matter much to grandpa, as he rarely drove at night and anyway it was not worth the bother to tune his radio elsewhere then try to find WAIT another day.

Thanks for the *Record Time* review!

Radio Active 2 – me

I have been publishing more since the second APA mailing. In *MarkTime 151* I heard little worth I felt like commenting upon from radio in Buffalo, Toronto, Ottawa, Montreal, Burlington, or Binghamton, though I will should note that WDEV (Waterbury VT) and Vermont Public Radio's Joel Najman is one of the rare Cool Dudes still on the air today, and has a beard as long as his career. Check out his "My Place" music history show Saturdays at 7:00 PM Eastern on vermontpublic.org. Another radio note from #151 ... while dodging the raindrops in Toronto, we made a point of visiting the Biblio-Mat random book vending machine at Monkey Paw's Books on Bloor Street. I wound up with a "Basic Radio Course" textbook from the Gernsback Library in New York. Hugo Gernsbeck is a bit more famous in science fiction fandom for publishing science fiction "pulp", enough to have the Worldcon book awards named "Hugo". Fun book for those into vacuum tube technology.

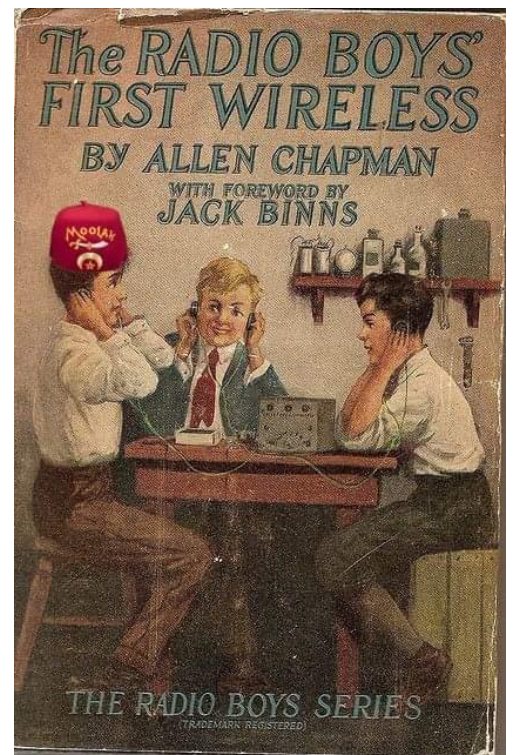
I did a bit more chattering about radio in *MarkTime 152*, when the soundtrack for much of my typing was the soon-to-die WZON in Bangor, Maine. I guess Stephen King got tired of owning radio stations, and just shut them down rather than sell them. Nancy and I did some late-season exploring in Utah, Idaho, and Wyoming, but the only radio I commented upon was "*Idaho Falls had plenty of radio, though the nearest to*



memorable was from the nearby colleges Idaho State University and Brigham Young U-Idaho. The latter has two stations, one KBYR with the expected religious talk but the other was KBYI with jazz, movie music, and classical."

The just-published *MarkTime 153* had no radio at all ... it was all just a collection of maps related to our US travels. I could say the soundtrack to piecing that together and to tonight's APA-zine typing has been some streaming of Paris radio stations. I will probably get into to best and/or funnest Paris radio next time.

That's all I have time for this time. See you again next mailing! = 73 =



From Gerry Hectic

April 2025

It's Easter Sunday 6:30 and I tune in to Manchester's All FM (www.allfm.org 96.9 - UK) and oddly they are playing New Orders' 'Blue Monday'. By coincidence, I was in attendance at the Manchester band's London debut gig at Heaven where I met my DJ hero, John Peel: and that was the end of my ambitions to be a DJ at the BBC. That was in 1980. I swapped my hero workshop to Gilles Peterson (Pirate Radio at the time) and more recently, with the encouragement of One Deck Peter to Short Wave, particularly This Is A Music Show (TIAMS) during lock-down in which 'Your Host' played records that he mostly found in Thrift Stores and \$ bins.

The UK equivalent is possibly the unique Charity Shop Classics, "showcasing the weird and wonderful world of tunes donated to charity shops - obscurities, bad covers, easy listening, hammond organ, club singers, one hit wonders, b-sides & more". The show was presented on a rolling basis by Simon, Gav and Jase with the occasional "Listener's Choice" shows and it's broadcast from Manchester's All FM: 2019's 'Radio Station of the Year' (National Community Radio Awards).

And what a great name for a community radio station and the reason for tuning in so early on Easter Sunday was, you've guessed it, Gerry Hectic was the "Listener's Choice"

Charity Shop Classics Show 499 Side A - Gerry Hectic Listener's Choice

[Charity Shop Classics Show 499 Side A - Gerry Hectic Listener's Choice by Charity Shop Classics | Mixcloud](#)



Next APA distribution

Our next edition will be compiled and distributed in August 2025.

Media and Me

Number One James N. Dawson, P.O. Box 950, Spokane, WA 99210 Spring 2025

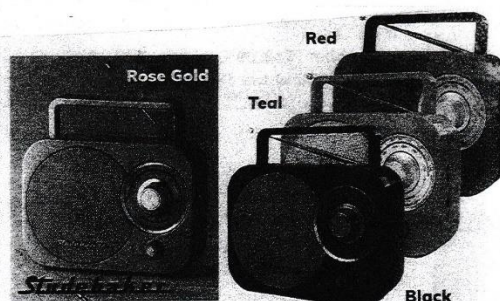
Hello Everyone!

Frederick mailed me a copy of The Radio Enthusiast APA with price information, which I listed in my last JND Ads & Contacts. I am also guessing this may have been a tacit invitation to contribute. Hoping I'm not being presumptuous, here I am, at my old typewriter, trying to gather my thoughts and focus, and seeing if I can come up with something for the April/early May issue. If not, maybe the next one.

Am I a radio "enthusiast"? Well, I'm afraid I lean much too much toward apathy these days to claim that, but I still have a few glimmers of hope for the old analogue radio and over-the-air transmission. My technical understanding of all this is pretty slim, but I try to add to it a little at a time. I'm not good at hunting down information on the Net. It's often a slow, tedious, disorienting process, but I attempt it now and then. I have an old 2019 phone book from which I've copied the yellow pages radio stations listing, but not all these have call letters or channel numbers. I recently hunted down some phone numbers to call to order print phone books, and I have done that. Maybe these will have better information. What I'd like is some simple, straightforward, intuitive printed or printable radio station programming guides. I've tried reading on-line guides, but for some reason I'm not sure of, they disorient and confuse me. What's on the radio? Explore the dial? I could. I might. But that takes a lot of time, and it's too hit or miss for me.

I was going to make a list of just some of the radios I have in my possession and review or comment on them, but decided that'd be too great a task at the moment. Hopefully a future issue. Most of my radios have been cheap or free, accumulated from yard sales or discount stores over the decades. I also have quite a number of portable cassette players, bought for as little as 50¢ to a dollar. What I am interested in is simple, decentralized machines and devices that run on batteries and springs, that can be powered by handcranks and maybe solar power. My electricity bill has been going up by leaps and bounds, and because of the climate change controversy, how we even power radios or broadcast has become even more politicized than it was in the past, and it was pretty politicized even then. What can we do to escape that control?

Finally, I suppose I'll warn my fellow members that I might be injecting a fair amount of "navel-gazing" in here. Why am I doing all this? How does it all relate to my quality of life? My grand life plan? Hey, you should should all know by now what an existentialist I am. If it makes anybody uncomfortable, I guess they'll just have to skim over it. If it's too hard skimming over the annoying parts, maybe they'll have to avoid the whole thing.



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radio stations

KLLK, Willits, CA. I first moved to California from Washington in the summer of 1987. I don't remember paying much attention to the call letters of the radio station I first started listening to, but I believe it was KLLK, "Little Lake Radio", based in Willits. At first it seemed to be adult contemporary or light rock. I remember hearing Marty Balin's "Run Away" a few times.

Some time around 1988 to 1990 I'm guessing, it turned into alternative or post-punk. Among the many songs and bands I discovered were Gone, Gone, Gone, by Echo and the Bunnymen, And You Drive Your Pretty Car by the Strawberry Zots, Cut Your Hair by Pavement, That's When I Reach for my Revolver by Mission of Burma, Stranger than Fiction by Bad Religion... and many, many more. It was a very small but unique station. The DJ's were very low-key and unobtrusive, I'm guessing in their 20's, and a bit amateur. Not the snarky, gossipy frat boy & girl types on many stations I listen to today. I have many fond memories of it.

One morning I tuned in and was thoroughly confused. It was like a different station altogether. I soon learned it had been sold. I didn't listen to it after that, but I think it'd turned into some kind of news-talk format. I was saddened, but it was great while it lasted.

YouTube

TECH REVIEW GUY. This is my old friend from way back, Gary Flanagan, electronic musician, photographer, teacher and retro-technology historian. I watched with interest his investigations of the first and last VCR, VHS tapes, cassette tapes, and a host of other extinct and disappearing media, and his reviews of their varying functionality. The videos are nice, short, informative and easy to digest.

VWESTLIFE. V takes apart, tests and evaluates old VCR's, cassette recorders and any number of old devices that were high-tech and innovative back in the 70's, 80's & 90's. Most of this goes over my head, but one thing I appreciate about V is that he speaks standard English slowly and grammatically and doesn't rattle off a stream of jargon like many technophiles do. So in watching these demos my slow brain has a decent chance of picking up enough to explain my own problems with these devices.

I really enjoyed his critique of a Heartland America catalogue. I used to page through these in wide-eyed wonder, dreaming of the things I'd do with tapes, discs, printers and copiers. I was glad and amused I wasn't the only one who realized how many lemons this company cranked out.

THE ANTENNA MAN. Originally "Tyler the Antenna Man", the host of this channel reviews over-the-air or broadcast television antennas on the market, and how well or how poorly they work. Other major topics are legislation which effects the remnants of broadcast TV, and the latest FCC machinations.

Most of this goes over my head both technically and legally, but maybe a little useful information sinks in.

When I first moved to Malden I had broadcast TV via some kind of converter. Very little of it was worth watching. The local news affiliates were a few channels, but I couldn't watch the national channels for more than a few minutes. The whole culture that permeated them... Good Morning America, etc... were unrelatable and unbearable.

There was one channel, This TV, that looked like it had some potential. It once ran Dracula Vs. Frankenstein, 1973, but that was either too late at night for me, or I just wasn't disciplined enough by then to catch it at the scheduled time.

YouTube, Antenna Man, cont.

In an interview with a fellow broadcast TV enthusiast, Robbie Strike, out of Canada, Tyler remarked that part of his love for the medium was just the enjoyment of exploring the dial for the surprise of what he might find. But he also said he actually watched broadcast TV very little. I suppose he and others are into all this for the technical challenges themselves. That's okay. Their tips and tricks may serve me well some day.

Mailing Comments for Radio Enthusiast No. 2

FREDERICK: Thanks much for the spec copy. I haven't had home internet for the last couple years and I think it has forced me to channel my time into off-line reading and writing. I do converse a little with some on-line people on their forums, but many don't have printable threads, which makes it hard for me, because I have to have something on paper to really digest it, and ruminate on responses. Everything seems to move too fast on the Net. But I could be doing more to engage there.

Thanks for reviewing Record Time. I also saw it in The Match. I'm making another mental note of putting it on file for the next JND Ads & Contacts.

Many decades ago I occasionally caught the Dr. Demento show, or some similar, with unintentionally bizarre, saccharine or maudlin songs. I vaguely remember one with the line "a patch of blue" and another about "sunshine and lollipops" apparently aimed at children. I wonder if any of those were recorded.

I also remember "Theater of the Mind" on KVI in Seattle. I listened to one of their old radio shows in the early 70's and found it surprisingly engrossing, some kind of suspense-drama.

I've got an old detached garage filled to the brim with vinyls, cassettes, books, zines and a million miscellaneous, but my desks, tables and shelves in my upstairs study are cluttered with cords and old half-functioning cathode ray tube computers. No space for music players. With the coming warmer weather, I hope to do some major clean-up and organization, and remedy that, so I can start playing some music. The task is as much psychological as physical. Hopefully I'll have more encouraging news in a future issue.

JUSTIN PATRICK MOORE: Your name looks very familiar, but I can't quite place it. I was thinking Bowel Movement Quarterly, but I think that was Josh Saitz. Anyway...

Decades ago I finally got an answering machine. I'd resisted doing so. I've always been quite the luddite. I thought it was a new-fangled extravagance, but I realized I should have one for my business. Today, I couldn't do without it. I screen all my calls, and rarely answer. I get a lot of spam calls. Most often, they aren't recorded, and I've never gotten a prank call.

In my early 20's, over a few months, maybe a year, a woman would call and talk dirty to me. This included the time after I'd recently moved out of the family home, which she called sometimes. Once my younger brother answered the phone, and she asked for me by name. When he told her that I'd moved, she let out a string of angry profanity. I never had a clue who it might have been. Yes, it was a bit creepy, but I confess, also a little flattering.

There was a made-for-TV movie, I think about 1975, "The Secret Night Caller", with Robert Reed. Did you ever see that?

MARK: APA's & Interaction. I have to admit I'm part of the problem when it comes to inactivity in APA's or zines in general. I've got a lot of letters and comments that swirl around in my head, but they seem to get

Mailing Comments, Mark Strickert, cont.

stuck there and can't find their way onto a peice of paper. It looks like yours come out easily, full of memories, facts and dates, in rich detail. It takes me days, weeks, even months to write an apa-zine as sparse as this one, and it comes out painfully slowly, a sentence, a phrase, a word at a time, with many a break and exhausted rest.

The Internet and the mobile phone killed the APA star. How're ya gonna keep 'em down on the farm when they've been to Gay Paree? I don't think these old APA activity rules are going to prod 'em. Reddit, Quora, X/Twitter, Facebook, ad nauseum seem to work for them and who am I to say they shouldn't, just because they don't work for me.

Thanks for the link to the radio locator. I put in my zip code and printed out the couple pages of stations. Very quick, intuitive and readable. I've got that next to my radio and little by little will do some dial exploration.

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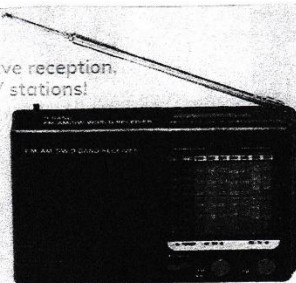


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SFERICS

By Justin Patrick Moore
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Radio had always held my interest since I was a kid, but first started getting interested in the world outside of the FM band during my successfully misspent year and a half at Antioch College. When I wasn't broadcasting as part of the crew of The Psychedelicatessen on Anti-Watt, I was either making 'zines, working at the student library, listening to music, or getting into some mischief of some kind. I got turned on to a lot of great music in those brief years. That was a major part of my real education. One of the groups I got turned onto and have had a major on-and-off love affair with ever since has been Meat Beat Manifesto. Jack Dangers, the man behind the project, must be a real radio head because shortwave interval signal samples and other references are littered across his work. One of the songs that really influenced me was "The Tweak" from the album *Actual Sounds and Voices*. This got me into learning about the whole area of natural radio and the sounds created by nature: sferics, whistlers, tweaks, dawn chorus, and all of those strange kinds of mysterious sounds you find in the Very Low Frequency portion of the spectrum.

My interest in avantgarde art music was influenced for the most part by listening to the Art Damage radio show on WAIF, Cincinnati, and from exploring the music collection at the Cincinnati Public Library. Somewhere along the way I got turned on to the music of Alvin Lucier. Lucier was an active participant in the latter half of the ONCE Festival that took place in Ann Arbor, Michigan from 1961 to 1966. There he rubbed elbows and became friends with the people who go on to form the Sonic Arts Union: Gordon Mumma, Robert Ashley, and David Behrman. They made music together and alone from 1966 to 1976. Lucier was something of a

sonic poet, and his conceptual musical pieces have a formal elegance and aesthetic appealing to both the senses of hearing, as well as stimulating the mind. In my obsession with all kinds of material of this sort, I was delighted to learn that one of his pieces from the early eighties explored the phenomenon of sferics.

Sferics, from 1981 remains one of his most elegant and simple works. It is just a recording. Other versions of *Sferics* could be produced, and many science and radio hobbyists make similar recordings without ever having heard of Alvin Lucier

The title of Lucier's work refers to broadband electromagnetic impulses that occur as a result of natural atmospheric lightning discharges and are able to be picked up as natural radiofrequency emissions. The VLF band ranges from about 3 kHz to 30 kHz and the wavelengths at this frequency are huge. Most commercial ham radio transceivers tend to only go as low as 160 meters which translates to between 1.8 and 2 MHz in frequency. A VLF wave at 3 kHz is by comparison a length of 100 kilometers. The VLF range includes a portion of the spectrum that is in the range of human hearing, from 20 Hz to 20 kHz. Yet since the sferics are electromagnetic waves rather than sound waves a person needs radio ears to listen to them: i.e., an antenna and receiver.

On average lightning bolts strike about forty-four times a second, adding up to around 1.4 billion flashes a year. It's a good thing the weather acts as a variable distribution system of these strikes, though some places get hit more than others. The discharge of all this electricity means there are a lot of electromagnetic emissions from these strikes going straight into the VLF band where they can be listened to with the right equipment. Because these wavelengths are so long,

you could be in California listening to a thunderstorm in Italy or India, or in Maine listening to sferics caused by storms in Australia.

The sound of sferics is kind of soothing and reminds me of the crackle of old vinyl that has been unearthed from a dusty vault in a thriftstore's basement. There are lots of pops and lots of hiss. As these are natural sounds picked up with the new extensions to our nervous system made available by telecommunications listening to sferics has the same kind of soothing effect as listening to a field recording of an ocean, or stream meandering through lonely woods. But for a long time, listeners, hobbyists and scientists didn't really know what these emissions were caused by. During the scientific research activities surrounding the International Geophysical Year (IGY) overlapping 1957-58 their presence and source was verified.

The IGY yearlong event was an international scientific project that managed to receive backing from sixty-seven countries in the East and West despite the ongoing tensions of the Cold War. The focus of the projects was on earth science. Scientists looked into phenomena surrounding the aurora borealis, geomagnetism, ionospheric physics, meteorology, oceanography, seismology, and solar activity. This was an auspicious area of study for the scientists, as the timing of the IGY coincided with the peak of solar cycle 19. When a solar cycle is at its peak, the ionosphere is highly charged by the sun making radio communications easier, and producing more occurrences of aurora, among other natural wonders.

One of the researchers was a man by the name of Morgan G. Millett, and his recordings would go on to have a direct influence on Alvin Lucier. Millett was an astrophysicist who had established one of the first programs to use the fresh discoveries occurring in the VLF band as a way to investigate the properties of space plasma around the earth, in the region now known as

the upper ionosphere and magnetosphere. His inquiries into this area allowed for deep gains of knowledge in a new area of study before space-crafts began making direct observations of this area.

Millet was also a ham radio operator with the call sign W1HDA. He had been interested in radio since he was a teenager, and throughout his career found ways to use his inclination and knack to research propagation. Throughout the 1940s and early 50s Millet and his colleagues conducted radar experiments near his home in Hanover, New Hampshire. The purpose of these studies was to observe two modes of propagation that magnetoionic theories had predicted would occur when radio waves entered the atmosphere.

During the IGY he chaired the US National Committee's Panel on Ionospheric Research of the National Research Council. In this capacity he oversaw the radio studies being conducted all around the earth. As part of that work he joined the re-supply mission to the US Antarctic station on the Weddell Sea in early 1958 as the senior scientific representative. For his own specific research he maintained a series of far-flung stations spread across the Americas. It was from these that he made a number of recordings of natural radio signals.

Lucier later heard these at Brandeis. The composer writes, "My interest in sferics goes back to 1967, when I discovered in the Brandeis University Library a disc recording of ionospheric sounds by astrophysicist Millett Morgan of Dartmouth College. I experimented with this material, processing it in various ways -- filtering, narrow band amplifying and phase-shifting -- but I was unhappy with the idea of altering natural sounds and uneasy about using someone else's material for my own purposes."

Millets recordings were made at a network of receiving stations and he interpreted the audio data he collected to obtain some of the earliest measurements of free electron density in the thousands of kilometers above earth. A colorful vocabulary was built up to describe the sounds heard in the VLF portion of the spectrum. Sferics that traveled over 2,000 kilometers often shifted their tone and came to be called tweeks; the frequency would become offset as it traveled in distance, cutting off some of the sound and making it sound higher in the treble range. Whistlers were another phenomenon heard on the air. They occurred when a lightning strike propagated out of the ionosphere and into the magnetosphere, along geomagnetic lines of force. The sound of a whistler is one of a descending tone, like a whistle fading into the background, hence its name. It is similar to the tweek, but elongated due to it stretching out away from the surface followed by a return to the Earth's magnetic field.

Dawn chorus is another atmospheric effect some lucky eavesdroppers in the VLF range may be able to pick up from time to time. It is an electromagnetic effect that may be picked up locally at dawn. The cause of this is thought to be generated from energetic electrons being injected into the inner magnetosphere, something that occurs more frequently during magnetic storms. These electrons interact with the normal ambient background noise heard in the VLF band to create a sound that is actually similar to that of birdsong in the morning. This sound is likely to be heard when aurorae are active when it is dubbed auroral chorus. Millets experimental work in recording these phenomena created a foundation to study such things as how the earth and its magnetic field interact with the solar wind.

Listening to Millet's recordings wasn't enough for Lucier. "I wanted to have the experience of listening to these sounds in real time and collecting them for myself. When Pauline Oliveros invited me to visit the music department at the University of California at San Diego a

year later, I proposed a whistler recording project. Despite two weeks of extending antenna wire across most of the La Jolla landscape and wrestling with homemade battery-operated radio receivers, Pauline and I had nothing to show for our efforts. . . .” The idea was shelved for over a decade.

In 1981 Lucier tried again. He got a hold of some better equipment and was able to go out to a location in Church Park, Colorado, on August 27th, 1981. For the Colorado recording he collected material continuously from midnight to dawn with a pair of homemade antennas and a stereo cassette tape recorder. He repositioned the antennas at regular intervals to explore the directivity of the propagated signals and to shift the stereo field. This was all done at Church Park, August 27th, 1981.

It was in the early 80s that Millet continued his own radio investigations. He built a network of radar observing stations to study gravity waves that propagate to lower latitudes of Earth from the arctic region. These gravity waves appear as propagating undulations in the lower layers of the ionosphere.

Lucier wasn't the only musician to be interested in this phenomenon. Electronic music producer Jack Dangers explored these sounds under his moniker as Meat Beat Manifesto on a song called The Tweek from the album Actual Sounds & Voices. Pink Floyd used dawn chorus on the opening track of their 1994 album the Division Bell. VLF enthusiast Stephen P. McGreevy has been tracking these sounds for some time, and has collected a lot of recordings and been releasing them on CD and the internet via archive.org. At the time of this writing he has made eight albums of such recordings.

Justin Patrick Moore's comments on Issue #2

Record Time:

Every time I hear Fred writing about the Record Time book I wonder why I haven't sent off for one already! Heaven knows I waste enough money on other things, that good money could be spent on a good book that will make me want to spend good money on good records. Books and records and radio oh my! If you have the bug, you have the bug. It's dangerous walking into a record store. It's dangerous logging onto Bandcamp to hunt for new music. But I always did love a good book that sent me on a hunt for even more interesting material!

Mark's comments on WAIF and other Cincinnati stations:

It's really interesting to hear how "radio connects us all." Who knows, Mark and I may have even crossed paths on one of his visits to Cincinnati between 1975 and 1991, but I would have just been 12 at the oldest in '91. That said, I have listened to WSAI and have a collection of vinyl records unloaded from a WSAI DJ at one point, and some other ephemera. I also have heard about WNOP from other people, but never really listened to that station when it was playing jazz. If I remember correctly my wife Audrey mentioned that WNOP used to be on a barge or was actually on the Ohio river. I guess I did recall it correctly because I just looked it up and found this interesting article from Larry Shudra: <https://larryshudra.wordpress.com/2011/03/06/wnop-the-jazz-ark-radio-free-newport/> Audrey probably mentioned this to me because I have long thought having pirate radio stations floating up and down on the Ohio river on barges or boats would be a good idea. Now I just need someone to bankroll the project and hire some lawyers just in case. Thanks for sharing your memories of Cincinnati radio mark! And you didn't even mention WKRC...

Canadian Station Logs:

Reading about Canadian Station logs from Mark Strickert reminds me how I've never really at all gotten into logging stations as part of the hobby. Listening and taping, yes. Maybe taping counts. But these kind of detailed logs I find so fascinating. I do love tuning into radio in other places when I travel, as Mark has shown us how he did when in Vancouver. Next time I go somewhere I will try to make a more detailed study. I want to add "LOGGING" to my radio bucket list of things I want to do with the hobby. CFRO - the co-op radio station sounds really interesting. Many discoveries await!